

CITY OF BALTIMORE

MARTIN O'MALLEY, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Data Show Lead Poisoning Declines in Baltimore City in 2005

July 28, 2006- Yesterday, the Maryland Department of the Environment released its *Childhood Blood Lead Surveillance Annual Report*. The report finds that in 2005, 854 children under age 6 years were identified with blood lead levels of 10 micrograms per deciliter or more in Baltimore City. This represents a 28% decline from 1,183 children in 2004.

The report also finds that in 2005, 70 children in Baltimore City were identified with lead levels over 20 micrograms per deciliter. This represents a 52% decrease from 147 children in 2004.

“The new data provide clear evidence of continued progress against childhood lead poisoning in Baltimore City,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “Yet there is still much more to do to reach our goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning by 2010.”

The report found a dip in the number of children tested from 18,970 in 2004 to 17,943 in 2005. A similar drop occurred statewide. The state attributed the decline to “more likely to be annual variation than real drop in blood lead testing.” In Baltimore City, 44% of children under age 3 were tested for lead poisoning in 2005.

“We applaud all the work of those parents, community organizations, health care providers, and property owners who have come together to fight lead poisoning,” said Madeleine Shea, Assistant Commissioner for Healthy Homes. “We also appreciate the collaboration and support from the state and federal government.” Dr. Shea is leading Health Department efforts to prevent lead poisoning efforts and increase blood lead testing in the city, where testing is required for 1- and 2-year olds.

“The new numbers show the progress that can be made when we, as a community, collectively determine to work together to protect our children,” said Ruth Ann Norton, director of the National Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning. She stated: “At the same time, it is clear that to reach our goal of ending childhood lead poisoning by 2010, much work remains. We must push for adequate funding to assure that we deliver on the promise made to our children and we must remain vigilant to enforce laws that promote Healthy Homes for all children. Our work is not done, but we can and we must prevail.”

The Baltimore City Health Department offers FREE lead testing at 312 N. Charles St, 2nd floor on Tuesdays from 1:00 pm—3:00 pm and on Thursdays from 9:00 am—12:00 pm.

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